

Message Text

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17

ACTION ARA-20

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 AEC-11 AID-20 CEA-02 CIAE-00 CIEP-02

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SCI-06 SPC-03 SS-20 STR-08 TRSE-00 PA-04 PRS-01

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FM AMEMBASSY CARACAS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3182

INFO AMEMBASSY BRASILIA

AMEMBASSY SANTIAGO

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EO 11652: NA

TAGS: ENRG OREP VE

SUBJECT: VISIT OF SECRETARY OF TREASURY SCHULTZ: MEETING OF U.S.
AND VENEZUELAN CONGRESSMEN CENTERS ON OIL PRICES

1. MORNING OF MARCH 28 THE U.S. CONGRESSMEN ACCOMPANYING SECRETARY SCHULTZ TO THE IDB BOARD OF GOVERNORS MEETING IN SANTIAGO MET WITH THE PRESIDENT OF THE VENEZUELAN CONGRESS, GONZALO BARRIOS, AND LATER WITH THE PRESIDENT OF THE CHAMBER OF DEPUTIES, GONZALO RAMIREZ CUBILLAN, AND SEVERAL OTHER PROMINENT VENEZUELAN CONGRESSMEN AT THE CAPITOL. U.S. CONGRESSMEN PARTICIPATING WERE GARNER E. SHRIVER (R - KANSAS), TOM BEVILL (D - ALABAMA), ROBERT G. STEPHENS (D - GEORGIA), LAWRENCE G. WILLIAMS (R - PENN), MARGARET M. HECKLER (R - MASS), AND BILL FRENZEL (R - MINN). DISCUSSION IN MEETINGS WAS FRANK BUT GOOD-NATURED AND FRIENDLY, AND U.S. CONGRESSMEN ALSO TOOK ADVANTAGE OF OPPORTUNITY TO VISIT LEGISLATIVE CHAMBERS.

2. U.S. CONGRESSMEN WERE FIRST RECEIVED, AND VERY GRACIOUSLY SO BY
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DR. BARRIOS. CONVERSATION CENTERED ON PROBLEMS IN U.S. AND

VENEZUELA, FUNCTIONING OF THE CONGRESSES IN THE TWO COUNTRIES, POLITICAL CAMPAIGNING, ETC. VISIT WAS MAINLY PROTOCOLARY, BUT U.S. CONGRESSMEN WERE VERY GRATEFUL FOR DR. BARRIO'S THOUGHTFUL GESTURE.

3. U.S. CONGRESSMEN LATER MET FOR ABOUT 1-1/4 HOURS WITH DR. RAMIREZ, SECOND VICE PRESIDENT OF THE CHAMBER OF DEPUTIES HUMBERTO CELLI, AND THE HEADS OF REPRESENTATIVES OF A NUMBER OF COMMITTEES IN THE CHAMBER OF DEPUTIES, INCLUDING JOSE RODRIGUEZ ITURBE (PRESIDENT OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS COMMITTEE), JUAN MANUEL SUCRE TRIAS (PRESIDENT OF ECONOMICS COMMITTEE). RAMIREZ BEGAN SESSION BY READING WELCOMING STATEMENT IN ENGLISH, AND CONGRESSMEN SHRIVER RESPONDED ON BEHALF OF U.S. CONGRESSMEN. RAMIREZ THEN ALLUDED TO PRESS STATEMENTS ATTRIBUTED TO SECRETARY SCHULTZ TO AFFECT THAT OIL PRICES ARE TOO HIGH, AND RPO-CEEDED TO MAKE LONG AND VIGOROUS DEFENSE OF VENEZUELA'S POSITION ON OIL PRICES. CONGRESSMAN WILLIAMS RESPONDED TO THE EFFECT THAT HIGH OIL PRICES ARE CAUSING A RAPID SHIFT TO ALTERNATE FORMS OF ENERGY AND THAT IN THE LONG RUN SOMEWHAT LOWER PRICES MIGHT BE IN VENEZUELA'S INTEREST. RAMIREZ AND CONGRESSMAN WILLIAMS CONTINUED FRIENDLY EXCHANGE OF VIEWS, AND DEPUTIES RODRIGUEZ AND TORREALBA LATER ADVANCED THEIR VIEWS SUPPORTING RAMIREZ. CONGRESSMAN SHRIVER NICELY SUMMED UP MEETING BY SAYING THAT THOUGH THERE ARE DIFFERENCES ON OIL, THE TWO COUNTRIES SHARE LONG FRIENDSHIP AND DEMOCRATIC TRADITIONS THAT SHOULD ALLOW ANY DIFFERENCES TO BE RESOLVED IN FRIENDLY MANNER, AND RAMIREZ ENDED MEETING BY RESPONDING IN SAME VEIN.

4. COMMENT: MEETING WITH RAMIREZ WAS USEFUL IN EXPOSING BOTH GROUPS OF CONGRESSMEN TO THE VIEWS OF THEIR COUNTERPARTS ON AN ISSUE THAT WAS MUCH ON THE MINDS OF ALL. IT WAS SIGNIFICANT THAT THOUGH DIFFERENCES ON SUCH AN IMPORTANT AND BASIC ISSUE OBVIOUSLY REMAIN, THE CONVERSATION WAS CONDUCTED IN A SPIRIT OF FRIENDLY DIALOGUE AND OPENNESS. THE ONLY REGRET OF SOME OF THE U.S. CONGRESSMEN WAS THAT THERE WAS NO TIME TO DISCUSS DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANCE (THE SUBJECT OF THE SANTIAGO MEETING) AND OTHER IMPORTANT SUBJECTS.
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